

# EVALUATING SWEETHEART RELATIONSHIPS: HEALTHY OR UNHEALTHY?

**Purpose of Activity:** To encourage critical thinking around characteristics of healthy and unhealthy sweetheart relationships.

**Estimated Time:** 60 minutes. Time flexible depending on number of scenarios created.

**Materials needed:** *Ingredients of a Healthy Relationship* worksheet, Stoplight worksheets, dating scenarios that reflect examples of healthy, unhealthy, and typical problems encountered in dating relationships. A red, green and yellow stoplight (or colored circles from construction paper) should be provided for each participant.

## Procedure:

Review each of the five concepts listed on the *Ingredients of a Healthy Relationship* worksheet. Ask students to share their ideas for each ingredient and its meaning. Use real life examples of the concepts to make them more understandable for students.

Review the symbolism of stoplights and how it might translate to behavior in romantic relationships (green- healthy/go or keep going, red- unhealthy/stop the relationship, yellow- slow down and use caution, a problem has developed, some work needs to be done to make things better).

Share with participants the list of characteristics for each stoplight and explain why each of the items on the list is healthy or unhealthy. Tell the group you are going to share some stories about “real-life” dating couples and some of things that could happen while they are dating. Let them know that they are going to act like “counselors” and they get to decide if the relationships are:

**Green-** the couple should keep the relationship going because things are going well

**Yellow-** there is a problem or the relationship needs some work to make things better.

**Red-** the relationship should stop because there is something about it that is unhealthy

Read each scenario out loud for the group and then ask each participant to hold up the stoplight/color they think best reflects characteristics of each scenario. Expect diversity in responses and encourage people to justify their answers if they can. If they identify a yellow light situation, encourage them to identify the problem specifically (label it) and role play the conversation that might need to occur.

## Key discussion points:

1. Have any of you had similar experiences as some of the “couples”?
2. What are some of the hardest things you’ve had to deal with in dating/romantic relationships (if participants are dating)? How did you handle these situations?
3. Why do you think people stay in dating relationships even when they are unhealthy (red light )?
4. Are there things you absolutely will not put up with in a relationship?
5. Do you think the stoplights could apply to other types of relationships (family, professional, etc.) in your life?